

Army’s training, career goals revolutionized

Distributed Learning System available on-line...

Shadi May
Army News Service

FORT SAM HOUSTON, Texas — Soldiers and Department of the Army civilians interested in taking courses to fulfill their training requirements or enhance their careers can do so through Army’s Distributed Learning System.

The DLS is an Army initiative funded fully by the Army to assist Soldiers and civilians to receive quality training in state-of-the-art facilities and to improve training efficiency and flexibility.

“Quality training is at the core of the Army’s mission, and it’s absolutely vital to readiness,” Col. Sharon Holmes, DLS project manager, said.

While the Army’s goal is to provide the best and most up-to-date training to Soldiers, it is not always an easy task because of Soldiers’ deployments, reassignments and family commitments. Whether it is military occupational skills training, annual common tasks training or career development courses, DLS affords Soldiers a chance to take courses from home or office.

“The thing I like about it is that you can go at your own pace,” said Spc. Chris Fitzgerald, a D Company, 187th Medical Battalion preventive medical specialist. “It’s one on one between you and the computer, and you don’t have to worry about falling behind like you would when an instructor goes over the material. You can go back and redo your lesson.”

DLS is also available to benefit civilian employees with their career enhancement goals. In fact, like Soldiers, civilians are actively taking

advantage of courses offered through the DLS system.

“It’s a method of delivering training which helps you avoid TDY costs and time out of the office,” said David Glass, Installation Labor Relations officer at Fort Sam Houston Civilian Personnel Advisory Center, while taking a ‘Dealing with Medical Issues in the Work Place’ video tele-training course.

VTT is among popular methods by which DLS accommodates its customers. Through this method, training can be accomplished where the instructor and student interact while linked via video conferencing, tele-conferencing or the internet.

DLS contributes to the Army’s ever changing environment. The training offered through this method can be available when the Soldiers are available and when the training is needed. Web-based training is available at times that are convenient for the student. VTT classes can also be taught in a live, interactive setting whether it’s 3 p.m. at Fort Sam Houston, 7 a.m. in Bosnia or 11 a.m. in Korea.

The DLS has begun to “field” an Army learning management system whereby Soldiers and civilians can register for courses through the Army Knowledge Online portal. The system will support management and administration of training products and allow supervisors and commanders access to personnel training records to see what type of training individuals had and to determine what type of training they need.

“Our challenge is to market the program and ensure all people entitled to the benefits use it, said Velma Burrs, chief, Multimedia Training



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Carmen Lopez-Dunn, an instructional system specialist, assists a student from 187th Medical Battalion, during validation of an integrated pest management computer-based course at Fort Sam Houston, Texas.

Branch, Department of Academic Support and Quality Assurance for Army Medical Department Center and School. “Our greatest service to AMEDDC&S is that we deliver mission essential training to personnel in worldwide locations.”

DLS consists of five components to include digital training facilities, the Army learning management system, Army e-learning, an enterprise management center and the development of the deployed digital training campus.

The Army has fielded the program worldwide on both active and Reserve installations at a total of 249 sites to include continental U.S. installations and those military installations located in Germany, Belgium, Italy, Korea, Japan and Okinawa.

Another attractive factor of DLS for commanders and supervisors is the cost savings to the government. While it could cost an average of

\$1,200 to send someone to a training conference, the DLS opportunities save units thousands of dollars in travel costs while providing immediate results.

“We have onboard maintenance,” said Gilbert Gutierrez, DLS facility manager at AMEDDC&S. “We are here 24/7 to accommodate the Army’s training mission. We encourage people to contact us to use the facility more.”

The Army’s goal is to have a DLS facility within a 50-mile radius of a Soldier’s home base. The intent of the program is to reach Soldiers throughout the world any time.

“The program’s quality promotes itself,” said Neta Lesjak, AMEDDC&S chief of Department of Academic Support and Quality Assurance.

To learn more about the DLS and courses offered, Soldiers and civilians can visit the Web site at www.dls.army.mil.

\$14M allocated for barracks improvement

Sgt. James Strine
Frontline Staff

Army’s Installation Management Agency recently allocated 14 million dollars for Fort Stewart to upgrade Soldiers’ heating and air conditioning services on post. In turn, Fort Stewart chose the Savannah District of the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to manage the contract.

On Feb. 25, the corps of engineers awarded the money to local North Central Mechanical Contractors. Work should begin in the next several weeks, said Directorate of Public Works Director Michael Biering.

According to Biering, the repairs will greatly improve Soldiers’ quality of life by providing extensive repairs to the heating and air conditioning systems in the barracks.

“By the time the Soldiers get back, we should be substantially complete,” he said.

This is only phase one of multi-year upgrades scheduled to improve the air conditioning and heating throughout post.

The next phase includes plans to upgrade post’s central energy plant.

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